

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 EB-08 AID-05 AF-10
ARA-10 EA-10 TRSE-00 HA-05 OIC-02 AGRE-00 CIAE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 CA-01 SP-02 L-03 ABF-01 /104 W
-----074418 230034Z /73

R 221440Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7669
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 07545

UNIDO

FROM USREP/UNIDO

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: UNRWA, XF, JO
SUBJECT: UNRWA - VIEWS OF COMMISSIONER GENERAL MC ELHINEY

REF: (A) AMMAN 6703; (B) AMMAN 6705

1. SUMMARY. THIS CABLE REPORTS VIEWS EXPRESSED BY UNRWA COMMISSIONER GENERAL MC ELHINEY ON UNRWA MOVE TO VIENNA AND MC ELHINEY'S INTENTION TO STOP CASH PURCHASES OF FLOUR FOR REFUGEE RATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. MC ELHINEY CALLED ON ME AUGUST 22 TO GET ACQUAINTED AND BRIEF ME ON UNRWA ACTIVITIES. WHILE MOST OF GROUND
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COVERED WILL BE OLD HAT TO ADDRESSEES, FOLLOWING MAY BE
OF INTEREST:

3. MC ELHINEY SAID HE WAS AWARE THAT EMBASSY AMMAN CONSIDERS IT NECESSARY FOR USG TO EXPRESS RESERVATIONS AT AUGUST 29 ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING ABOUT MOVE TO VIENNA BUT HE HOPES USG WILL DECIDE NOT TO DO SO. HE IS CONFI-

DENT MOVE MADE GOOD SENSE AND WAS ONLY COURSE POSSIBLE IN CIRCUMSTANCES. HE SAID HOST GOVERNMENTS ADMIT THIS PRIVATELY. EVEN PLO WARNED HIM IN ADVANCE THAT THEY HAD TO SPEAK OUT PUBLICLY FOR POLITICAL REASONS, BUT THAT THEY UNDERSTOOD IMPERATIVES OF SITUATION HE FACED. DANGER MC ELHINEY SEES IS THAT HOST GOVERNMENTS WILL BE TRAPPED BY THEIR OWN RHETORIC AND WILL ACT UNWISELY IF FORCED TO CONFRONT ISSUE HEAD-ON. HE FEARS THAT JORDAN IS CLOSE TO THIS POINT.

4. RE POSSIBLE MEANS OF SAVING FACE FOR CRITICS, MC ELHINEY SAID THAT HE WILL MAINTAIN A FULLY-STAFFED COMMISSIONER GENERAL'S OFFICE IN AMMAN AS WELL AS IN VIENNA. HOWEVER, IT IS NOT PRACTICAL FOR HIM TO BE IN RESIDENCE FOR EXTENDED PERIODS IN AMMAN (OR IN VIENNA FOR THAT MATTER) BECAUSE HE SPENDS AT LEAST FOUR MONTHS EVERY YEAR IN THE U.S. AND MUCH ADDITIONAL TIME TRAVELING BOTH IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND TO DONOR COUNTRIES. (COMMENT: MC ELHINEY SEEMED SOMEWHAT OBLIVIOUS TO THE PRESENTATIONAL PROBLEM. I SUGGESTED THAT, INSTEAD OF TALKING ABOUT HOW LITTLE TIME HIS TRAVEL SCHEDULE PERMITS HIM TO SPEND IN AMMAN, HE EMPHASIZE HOW MUCH TIME HE SPENDS IN AMMAN AND THE MIDDLE EAST AREA WHEN NOT TRAVELING OUTSIDE THE AREA ON UNRWA BUSINESS.)

5. MC ELHINEY SAID QUARTERS AUSTRIANS HAVE PROVIDED IN
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VIENNA ARE FIRST-CLASS -- THE BEST UNRWA HAS EVER HAD. HE CONFIRMED THAT EXTRA COST OF OPERATING IN VIENNA WILL BE ABOUT \$3.5 MILLION MORE THAN IN BEIRUT, MAINLY DUE TO HIGHER COST OF STAFF BENEFITS. (I UNDERSTOOD HIM TO SAY THAT EXTRA COST WOULD BE ABOUT \$2 MILLION MORE THAN IF VIENNA CONTINGENT HAD MOVED TO AMMAN INSTEAD, ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT CONSISTENT WITH PENULTIMATE SENTENCE, PARA 2 REFTEL B.) MC ELHINEY SEEMED CONFIDENT HE COULD DEFEND THE FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF THE MOVE TO VIENNA. HE SAID EXTRA OUTLAYS COULD BE MADE UP BY ECONOMIES AND INCREASED EFFICIENCIES (E.G., "THE TELEPHONES WORK HERE") AND WOULD NOT RESULT IN ANY REDUCTION IN PROGRAMS. HE NOTED THAT THE MUCH HIGHER RATE OF INFLATION IN JORDAN WOULD QUICKLY MAKE UP THE DIFFERENCE IN ANY EVENT.

6. MC ELHINEY SAID HE INTENDS TO STOP BUYING FLOUR FOR THE RATION PROGRAM. THE FLOUR RATION WILL THUS BE LIMITED TO THE AMOUNT OF DONATIONS IN KIND, PROBABLY RESULTING IN A CUT FROM 10 KILOS PER RATION TO ABOUT 5. HE THINKS THE LARGER FLOUR RATION IS NO LONGER NECESSARY AND THAT THE CASH RESOURCES CAN BETTER BE DEVOTED TO THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM. MC ELHINEY SAID HE WILL FOLLOW THROUGH ON THIS

INTENTION "UNLESS THERE IS A STORM OF PROTEST FROM THE
HOST GOVERNMENTS". LEARY

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, TRANSFER OF OFFICES, FLOUR
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978VIENNA07545
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780343-1110
Format: TEL
From: VIENNA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780835/aaaabdhm.tel
Line Count: 118
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f5c6bf5d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 AMMAN 67, 78 AMMAN 67
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1654578
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UNRWA - VIEWS OF COMMISSIONER GENERAL MC ELHINEY
TAGS: SREF, PORG, AFIN, XF, JO, UNRWA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f5c6bf5d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014